

Claims:

1-28. (cancelled)

29. (currently amended) A decoding apparatus for decoding encoded pictures and outputting the decoded pictures, comprising:

at least one coded picture buffer in which the encoded pictures are storable, wherein each of the encoded picture is associated with decoding timing information indicative of a delay time to be held for decoding and output delay information indicative of a delay time to be held for output;

a decoder configured to perform ~~an inter-prediction~~ a decoding operation on each of the encoded pictures at a timing in accordance with the decoding timing information;

at least one decoded picture buffer in which the decoded pictures are storable; and

an output controller configured to output each of the decoded pictures from the at least one decoded picture buffer at a timing determined based on the decoding timing information and the output delay information.

30. (previously presented) A decoding apparatus according to claim 29, wherein the decoding timing information is indicative of a delay time for each of the encoded pictures to wait before being removed from the at least one coded picture buffer.

31. (previously presented) A decoding apparatus according to claim 29, wherein the decoding timing information is indicative of a decoding time of a respective encoded picture.

32. (previously presented) A decoding apparatus according to claim 29, wherein the output delay information is indicative of a delay time for each of the decoded pictures to wait before being outputted from the at least one decoded picture buffer.

33. (previously presented) A decoding apparatus according to claim 29, wherein the output delay information is indicative of a maximum delay time.

34. (currently amended) A method for decoding encoded pictures and outputting the decoded pictures, comprising:

storing the encoded pictures in at least one coded buffer, wherein each of the encoded picture is associated with decoding timing information indicative of a delay time to be held for decoding and output delay information is indicative of a delay time to be held for output;

performing an ~~inter-prediction~~ decoding operation on each of the encoded pictures at a timing in accordance with the decoding timing information;

storing the decoded pictures are storable in at least one decoded picture buffer;
and

outputting each of the decoded pictures from the at least one decoded picture buffer at a timing determined based on the decoding timing information and the output delay information.

35. (previously presented) A method according to claim 34, wherein the decoding timing information is indicative of a delay time for each of the encoded pictures to wait before being removed from the at least one coded picture buffer.

36. (previously presented) A method according to claim 34, wherein the decoding timing information is indicative of a decoding time of a respective encoded picture.

37. (previously presented) A method according to claim 34, wherein the output delay information is indicative of a delay time for each of the decoded pictures to wait before being outputted from the at least one decoded picture buffer.

38. (previously presented) A method of according to claim 34, wherein the output delay information is indicative of a maximum delay time.